



CSI RD&D PROGRAM

Research Investment

Grantees:

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the University of California, Berkeley

CSI RD&D Funding:

\$10,000,000

Match Funding:

\$67,040

Project Timeframe:

2009-2013

Solar Energy Research Center

The first grant initiated through the CSI RD&D Program was for the Solar Energy Research Center (SERC), formerly known as the Helios Project, at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and the University of California, Berkeley. The \$10 million grant, along with \$30 million in State Lease Revenue Bonds and \$14 million in external financing provided the capital for design and construction of the research facility. The primary goal of the SERC is to develop methods to “store” solar energy in the form of renewable transportation fuel. Several approaches under investigation include the generation of biofuels from biomass, the generation of biofuels from algae, and the direct conversion of water and carbon dioxide to fuels using solar energy.

Senate Bill 1 (SB1), signed into law on August 21, 2006, directed the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to allocate up to \$50 million to research, development, and demonstration as part of the California Solar Initiative. The CPUC, through their adopted Plan (D.07-09-042), allocated the 20% research component of the CSI RD&D program to the SERC project.

The groundbreaking for the SERC was held on October 19, 2012. The three-story facility is nearly 40,000 square feet in size and houses approximately 75 research staff. On May 26, 2015, the SERC opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and named the facility Chu Hall in recognition of Steven Chu, the United States Energy Secretary who spearheaded President Obama’s Sunshot Initiative and a former Director of LBNL.



This document provides a brief project description. For more detail on the project and the California Solar Initiative’s (CSI) Research Development, Demonstration & Deployment (RD&D) Program, please visit calsolarresearch.ca.gov

The CSI RD&D Program is managed by Itron on behalf of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).



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MANAGER